

Victor Riesel Discusses the Master Freight Agreement, 1964

Barry Farber: This is Barry Farber, and if accuracy were energy, the gentleman across the microphone right now could lift the Journal-American Building, presses and all, eight feet off the ground and hold it there through all five editions. He's Victor Riesel and his information comes to him raw, from all over the world, and it comes out refined in his nationally syndicated column in the *New York Journal-American*. Tonight I want to ask you, as a man who knows the inside story and many inside stories, is Jimmy Hoffa more powerful than the president of the United States?

Victor Riesel: No, Jimmy Hoffa is not. If Jimmy Hoffa is not convicted in Chattanooga on this thing, if Jimmy Hoffa comes out and can reorganize his strength in the Teamsters, I think Jimmy Hoffa would be, could be, one of the most powerful civilians in the world. But that sheer power would be negated because he would coalesce all forces in Congress against him. But is he more powerful than the President of the United States? I do not think so. I think no man, and I think he's going to learn, is bigger than the United States government or any of its divisions.

Barry Farber: But in a column that you pointed out where he was getting all these contracts to expire on the same date, so that on that date, Jimmy Hoffa alone could make America stop or go. Whatever became of that scheme? Is he still collecting those expiration dates?

Victor Riesel: Oh no, he's got the common expiration date. His deadline was February 4th, 19... February 1st, 1964. I'm proud that I broke that story many years ago. He made that deadline. He now has a master contract, with the variations on the general theme, covering 16,000 firms, 450,000 drivers over the road and local cottage, a common expiration date and central bargaining, and by committees which he will dominate if he is not convicted in Chattanooga on charges of aiding and dosing and commanding efforts to influence jurors in the Nashville case in exchange for money or favors, and I'm quoting from the Department of Justice document.